

Career Services for International Students of English Taught Programs in Japanese Universities

Nobuaki Sakai
Nagoya University
sakai.nobuaki@iee.nagoya-u.ac.jp

Abstract: This paper highlights the importance of career services for international students of English taught programs in Japanese universities. The author conducted a questionnaire survey among newly enrolled international students of Nagoya University of both the English and non-English taught degree programs. The results revealed the following three points: 1) The English taught program students, who have international backgrounds, are flexible about deciding their place of residence after graduation. 2) Career services should not be limited to one option such as “employment” or “advanced studies” for all the international students. 3) Many of the students in English taught programs rather than those in non-English taught programs expressed concerns about cross-cultural adaptation and culture shock in their college life. Support for students including finding housing, applying for scholarships, and adjusting to cross-cultural adaptation is important, as are career services, especially for English taught program students, as it will enable them to concentrate on their studies in Japan.

Keywords: Career services, International students, Japanese university, English taught programs

INTRODUCTION

This study reports on the career services Japanese universities should provide international students in English taught programs, based on a survey conducted on all the newly enrolled international students in Nagoya University. There are several research examples on career services for international students in Japanese universities. However, most of the researches focus on the importance of Japanese language education for international students to study for their job-hunting in Japan (Fukuoka 2015, Inai 2012). The author therefore conducted a survey on career path among new international students who had just entered Nagoya University and analyzed what kinds of career services the university should provide them.

METHOD

Research Objective

This study was conducted to identify the kinds of career services available for international students of English taught programs in Japanese universities by comparing them with the ones available for students of Non-English-Taught programs.

Method

Survey forms were distributed during the “International Student Orientation,” which was attended by 313 new international students in Nagoya University on September 27, 2017. For this survey, the author asked the students to provide responses to questions on their career path and concerns about college life and then collected the answered questionnaires before the orientation ended. The results were categorized into two groups: the “English Taught programs” and the “Non-English Taught programs” groups, and the responses were analyzed. The questionnaire was prepared in both Japanese and English.

Affiliation of the Students

The affiliations of the 313 new international students are shown in the following tables.

Table 1: Number of students by courses

	English taught programs	Non-English taught programs	TOTAL
Bachelor's	40	4	44
Master's	20	33	53
Ph.D.	5	16	21
Research Student	5	145	150

Others (Japanese Language Course, etc.,)	6	39	45
TOTAL	76	237	313

Table 2: Number of students by department & school

	English taught programs	Non- English taught programs	TOTAL
Humanities	37	142	179
Science	34	54	88
Interdisciplinary Program	2	38	40
Not Answered	0	6	6
TOTAL	73	240	313

Table 3: Number of students by nationality

	English taught programs	Non- English taught programs	TOTAL
China	16	141	157
Vietnam	10	5	15
Indonesia	4	10	14
Korea	4	7	11
Thailand	4	5	9
Mongolia	4	3	7
Japan	6	1	7
Myanmar	1	4	5
Cambodia	2	8	10
Philippines	0	5	5
Poland	0	4	4
Bangladesh	1	2	3
Uzbekistan	1	2	3
Sri Lanka	0	3	3
Laos	1	2	3
Other Areas & Countries	19	38	57
TOTAL	73	240	313

Table 4: Number of students by language used to respond to the questionnaire

	English taught programs	Non- English taught programs	TOTAL
Japanese	1	138	139
English	75	99	174
TOTAL	76	237	313

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Q1. "Where will you live after graduating from Nagoya University?"

Result 1

The following findings are presented in Table 5:

- 1) More than half of the students in English taught programs had not decided where they would live after graduating from university.
- 2) In contrast, more than half of the students in non-English taught programs decided where they would live after their graduation..

Table 5: Number of students who answered the question "Where will you live after graduating from Nagoya University?"

	English taught programs	Non- English taught programs	TOTAL
Already Decided*	33	139	172
Not Decided	43	98	141
TOTAL	76	237	313

*"Already Decided" includes the answers "Japan," "Home country," "Other than Japan or home county," and "Other, specific country."

Discussion

As Result 1 shows, the English taught program students, who have international backgrounds, can be flexible regarding their place of residence after graduation. It also shows that because these students are not guaranteed opportunities to learn the Japanese language in the university, they find it difficult to imagine living in Japan as a career option. In the questionnaire survey, the students expressed the

following concerns about living in Japan during their upcoming student life:

“I have to admit that are so many things I have to catch up with. I am concerned about my Japanese skill and adapting ability in general.” (English taught program research student from South East Asia)

“Worrying over my own Japanese language level.” (English taught program bachelor’s student from China)

“Language barriers weight occur as I do not speak good enough Japanese to hold daily conversations and I have found that not many places speak English outside campus.” (English-Taught program Master student from China)

Nagoya University has the English taught program students making efforts to learn Japanese. If the university set up more opportunities for the students to interact with Japanese people and to use their Japanese in their daily student life, they will understand Japanese culture or society well. It is clear that the interaction with Japanese will promote the students to decide on where to live (Japan or home or other country) after their graduation.

Q2. “Which career will you choose after graduating from Nagoya University?”

Result 2

Table 6: Number of students who answered the question “Which career path will you choose after graduating from Nagoya University?”

	English taught programs	Non-English taught programs	TOTAL
Already Decided*	22	109	131
Not Decided	54	128	182
TOTAL	76	237	313

*“Already Decided” includes the answers “Work in/return to company,” “Work in/return to research institution,” “Work in/return to public institution,” and “Pursue further education.”

Table 6 reveals that there were many students in both programs who answered that their career path after graduation was “Not decided” than those who answered that they had “Already Decided.”

Discussion

As Result 2 indicates, there were more “Not Decided” than “Already Decided” answers with regard to career path among students of both the programs. This shows that international students cannot easily decide on their future careers because they seem to have several options. The university should provide career services that offer comprehensive support for international students, regardless of whether they are in English or non-English taught programs, to develop their careers. The services should not be limited to only working in a company but should help them explore what they want to do in the future. The following questionnaire responses reveal the students’ struggle with regard to determining what to do in the future:

“I don't know what I would do like after graduation yet. Maybe go back to my home country then work about there?” (English taught program bachelor’s student from Indonesia)

“I might want to teach in Japan, but I'm still undecided about what I want to do and whether I want to stay in Japan or return to the U.S.” (English taught program master’s student from the United States)

“I would like to find a job in Japan or the U.S.” (English taught program bachelor’ student from Japan)

As Suematsu (2010) pointed out, international students have various career options including not only living in Japan but also going back to home country. The career options do not always mean working in a company for them, so they may choose to pursue further education or start up their own business. Many choices in the future make them confused to decide on their career.

Q3. “Do you have any concerns or worries about your upcoming school life?”

Result 3

Table 7 indicates the following points:

- 1) There were more students who answered “Yes” than those who answered “No” in English-Taught programs.
- 2) There were more students who answered “No” than those who answered “Yes” in non-English taught programs.
- 3) We could see a higher proportion of students in English taught programs than in non-English taught programs with concerns about their upcoming college life.

Table 7: Number of students who answered the question “Do you have any concerns or worries about your upcoming school life?”

	English taught programs	Non-English taught programs	TOTAL
Yes	39	91	130
No	37	146	183
TOTAL	76	237	313

Discussion

Result 3 shows that not only language support but also living support are necessary, especially for English taught program students because many of these students expressed their concerns about cultural adaptation in Japan. The proportion of international students who cannot decide on the place of residence or career path after graduation is higher in English taught programs than in non-English taught programs. We could therefore say that more students in English taught programs than in non-English taught programs have concerns about their student life. In fact, the following are a few examples of some of the English taught program students expressing their anxiety about cultural adaptation and culture shock in Japan:

“Finding the right balance between academic load while facing culture shock.” (English taught program bachelor’s student from India)

“Balancing school work and interests and living alone.” (English taught program bachelor’s student from China)

“First, the concern about Japanese language, and then culture shock.” (English taught program master’s student from China)

International students in the English taught Program are easy to face up with a cultural shock because of insufficient understanding of Japanese society and culture (Tanaka 2017). If the university can get rid of the student’s cultural concerns on their daily life, they will concentrate on their study and daily lives; then, they can be positive to think about their future. Therefore, advising & counseling services in their mental health are also important from the viewpoint of career development to the international students.

CONCLUSION

This research indicates the following three findings.

1) The English taught Program students, who have international backgrounds, are flexible on deciding on the place of residence after their graduation. Also, due to their limited Japanese

ability or lack of understanding Japanese culture, it seems to be hard for them to think of living in Japan after the graduation.

- 2) Career services is necessary not only for the English taught Program students but also for all the international students to develop their career with their international education background, and it should not be limited to one career option such as "employment" or "advanced studies".
- 3) Many of the students in the English taught Program mentioned concerns on cross-cultural adaptation and culture shock in their college life in Japan so that the university should thoroughly support for their daily life in Japan.

English taught Program students are exposed to a culturally confusing environment where it is difficult to decide on their career path including where to live after graduation. Student supports such as housing, scholarship, cross-cultural adaptation are important as well as career services especially for English taught Program students to concentrate on their study in Japan.

It is said that career services in Japanese universities generally emphasis on job-hunting in Japan (Shimomura 2011). Career services should originally be the preparation for "working", "living", "learning" in the whole life career (Komikawa 2011). Providing the services to ease their daily concerns would contribute the students to concentrate on their study in Japan and develop their global career.

REFERENCES

- Fukuoka, M. (2015). Suggestions for business Japanese language education from a foreign students' employment opinion survey. *Journal of the International Exchange Center, Mie University, 50*, 1-18.
- Inai, T. (2012). Career-building education and job hunting support for Chinese overseas students. *Journal of the Takamatsu University, 56/57*, 1-37.
- Komikawa, K. (2013) Lie on career education *Chikuma Shinsho*, 178.
- Shimomura, H. (2009) Psychology in Career Education *Tokai Education Research Institute*, 80-81
- Suematsu, K. (2010). Career support for international students : The role universities should play and basic points to be considered in implementing comprehensive support *Journal of the International Education, Japan Association for International Student Education, 15*, 15-26.
- Tanaka, K. , Takagi, H., Sakai, T., Wada, H., Oi, S.(2017) Report on advising and counseling services division. *Journal of the International Education and Exchange Center, Nagoya University, 4*, 87-98.